Amendments to the Claims

1-35. (Cancelled)

- 36. (Currently amended) An isolated antibody which specifically binds to a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) protein or a salt of said MMP protein, or a partial peptide of said MMP protein or a salt of said partial peptide, said matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof comprising the following peptide fragments of SEQ ID No: 2: (a) Gly¹⁰⁹ to Arg¹¹⁹, (b) Pro¹⁷¹ to Gly¹⁷⁸, (c) Thr²²⁹ to Leu²⁴² and (d) Asp⁵³³ to Val⁶⁰⁷, said matrix metalloproteinase protein having a maximum molecular weight of approximately 69kDa and is a pro MMP-2 activating factor, said partial peptide or salt thereof comprising continuous antigenic amino acid residues of SEQ ID No: 2 which are characteristic of said MMP protein.
- 37. (Previously presented) The antibody according to claim 36, wherein said matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof further comprises the peptide fragment Ala⁵⁶⁴ to Phe⁵⁸⁷ of SEQ ID No: 2, said Ala⁵⁶⁴ to Phe⁵⁸⁷ fragment being located at or near the C-terminal of the protein.
- **38.** (**Previously presented**) The antibody according to claim 36, wherein said matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof comprises the amino acid sequence as set forth in SEQ ID No: 2.

39-40. (Cancelled)

- **41. (Previously presented)** The antibody according to claim 36, wherein the antibody specifically binds against said partial peptide or salt thereof.
- **42. (Previously presented)** The antibody according to claim 36, wherein the antibody is polyclonal.

43. (**Previously presented**) The antibody according to claim 36, wherein the antibody is monoclonal.

44. (Previously presented) The antibody according to claim 36, wherein the antibody is labeled.

45. (Currently amended) A method for producing an antibody, which comprises:

immunizing an animal with an antigen selected from the group consisting of a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) protein or a salt of said MMP protein, or a partial peptide of said MMP protein or and a salt of said partial peptide, said matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof comprising the following peptide fragments of SEQ ID No: 2: (a) Gly¹⁰⁹ to Arg¹¹⁹, (b) Pro¹⁷¹ to Gly¹⁷⁸, (c) Thr²²⁹ to Leu²⁴² and (d) Asp⁵³³ to Val⁶⁰⁷, said matrix metalloproteinase protein having a maximum molecular weight of approximately 69kDa and is a pro MMP-2 activating factor, said partial peptide or salt thereof comprising continuous antigenic amino acid residues of SEQ ID No: 2 which are characteristic of said MMP protein, and

isolating an antibody which specifically binds to said antigen.

46. (Currently amended) A method for producing an antibody, which comprises: immunizing an animal with an antigen selected from the group consisting of a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) protein or, a salt of said MMP protein, or a partial peptide of said MMP protein or, and a salt of said partial peptide, said matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof comprising the following peptide fragments of SEQ ID No: 2: (a) Gly¹⁰⁹ to Arg¹¹⁹, (b) Pro¹⁷¹ to Gly¹⁷⁸, (c) Thr²²⁹ to Leu²⁴² and (d) Asp⁵³³ to Val⁶⁰⁷, said matrix metalloproteinase protein having a maximum molecular weight of approximately 69kDa and is a pro MMP-2 activating factor, said partial peptide or salt thereof comprising continuous antigenic amino acid residues of SEQ ID No: 2 which are characteristic of said MMP protein, to obtain an antibody-producing cell which produces an antibody which specifically binds to said antigen,

fusing said antibody-producing cell with an immortal cell, and selecting an immortal hybrid cell which produces a monoclonal antibody which specifically binds to said antigen.

47. (Currently amended) A method for detecting and/or measuring a matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof, which comprises:

contacting a test sample with an antibody which specifically binds to a matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) protein or a salt of said MMP protein, or a partial peptide of said MMP protein or a salt of said partial peptide, said matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof comprising the following peptide fragments of SEQ ID No: 2: (a) Gly¹⁰⁹ to Arg¹¹⁹, (b) Pro¹⁷¹ to Gly¹⁷⁸, (c) Thr²²⁹ to Leu²⁴² and (d) Asp⁵³³ to Val⁶⁰⁷, said matrix metalloproteinase protein having a maximum molecular wight of approximately 69kDa and is a pro MMP-2 activating factor, said partial peptide or salt thereof comprising continuous antigenic amino acid residues of SEQ ID No: 2 which are characteristic of said MMP protein, and

detecting and/or measuring the matrix metalloproteinase protein or salt thereof bound to the antibody.

- **48.** (**Previously presented**) The method according to claim 47, wherein the antibody is labelled.
 - **49.** (**Previously presented**) The antibody according to claim 36, wherein said partial peptide or salt thereof comprises SEQ ID NO: 5, 6, 7 or 8.
 - 50. (Cancelled)
- **51.** (**Previously presented**) The antibody according to claim 36, which is produced using a partial peptide of said matrix metalloproteinase protein selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOS: 5, 6, 7 and 8.

- **52.** (**Previously presented**) The antibody according to claim 36, which is not crossreactive with any one of the matrix metalloproteinase (MMP) protein selected from the group consisting of MMP-1, MMP-2, MMP-3, MMP-7, MMP-8 and MMP-9.
- **53.** (Currently amended) The antibody according to claim 36, wherein said partial peptide or salt thereof comprises at least 8 continuous antigenic amino acid residues of SEQ ID No: 2 which are characteristic of said MMP protein.